



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

**December 17, 2014 at 4:30 pm
Council Chambers**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Ian Kohen, Chairperson
Trena Carter, Treasurer
Kelly Benjamin, Secretary
Gil Palmer
Annette Barnes
Greg Lewis
Richard Gold
Tony McClendon

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Rhea Baker-Ipek
Sameer Samudra
John Stroh, Vice Chairperson

STAFF PRESENT

Aida Ramirez, Director
Molly Connor, Deputy Director
Betsy Schuette, Secretary

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

GUEST ATTENDANCE

Tim Shuffett, City Council Liaison

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Commissioner Carter moved that the October minutes be approved. Commissioner Benjamin seconded. Motion carried. October minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Carter reported the balance of the Donations Account as \$7,019.24 with no activity since the last reporting period. The MACDA Video Grant had a beginning balance of \$10,000 with expenses going to Yes! Cinema for \$1,052.00, and Cantaloupe, LLC for \$5,760.00 since the last reporting period. **Commissioner Palmer moved that the December Treasurer's Report be approved. Commissioner Gold seconded. Motion carried. December Treasurer's Report was approved.**

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson Kohen reported that he met with Mayor Brown and conducted an Executive Committee meeting during this reporting period.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

CASEWORK:

Director Ramirez reported the office is continuing to stay busy with case work. The following is the case activity that occurred:

Phone intake:

- Disability accommodation in post-secondary school system; currently under review
- Public accommodation, familial status; currently under review (no show to scheduled intake)
- Sexual harassment in workplace; issue resolved
- Wrongful termination; not actionable
- Public accommodation, race; not actionable
- Immigration bond issues; not actionable, referred to attorney

Office intake:

- Age discrimination in employment; ongoing
- Disability accommodation; not actionable
- Wrongful termination; not actionable

Scheduled in-person intake:

- Sexual harassment in housing by employee of management, technical assist in eviction/fumigation; ongoing
- Wrongful termination, under review

Technical assist:

- FSSA internal complaint, currently under review
- HUD complaint, disability and sexual harassment in housing
- HUD complaint, national origin in housing

Closed cases:

- Sexual harassment and national origin in employment, closed due to mediation

OFFICE:

- Director Ramirez reported that staff continues to attend Director's meetings, City Council meetings, and Board of Works.
- Deputy Director Connor attended a seminar titled Legal Issues Involving Local Governments on November 13th.
- Staff attended the MACDA Grant Video premiere at Yes! Cinema on November 18th.
- Director Ramirez and Deputy Director Connor attended a workshop for management called Setting Expectations and Managing Performance on November 20th.
- Staff attended the Mayor's Holiday Luncheon on December 5th.
- CHRC has been authorized to design and purchase case management software. Staff is currently working on logistics. Full implementation of new case management software is expected by the end of the 1st Quarter 2015.

OTHER ACTIVITIES-NETWORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY/EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY:

IUPUC:

Director Ramirez reported that she was asked by Professor Thomas Clerkin, Associate Professor of Management, to present a lecture on December 1st regarding HR issues, issues of diversity in Columbus, and various other topics in employment law. There were 25 students enrolled in the class. Director Ramirez reported they were a very engaged and lively group of students.

Leadership Bartholomew County:

Director Ramirez gave a presentation on November 18th for Leadership Bartholomew County. The class met in the Meeting Hall at City Hall. The topic of the discussion was the changing face of Columbus and the rising population of diverse residents.

MACDA Video Grant Premiere:

Director Ramirez reported that she, Deputy Director Connor, and Commissioners Kohen, Benjamin, and Gold went to the MACDA Video Grant premiere at Yes! Cinema on November 18th. The videos were a spotlight on individuals with disabilities and their successful roles in the workplace. The guest speaker James Emmett spoke about the development of employment services for individuals with disabilities. The event was well attended.

Art for AIDS:

Director Ramirez and Commissioners Gold, Palmer, and Samudra attended the Songs & Stories of Life benefit sponsored by Art for AIDS on December 4th. There were performances by Bernard Woma and the Saakumu Dance Troupe, along with storytelling directed by Jan Lucas Grimm. Director Ramirez reported that there was a fabulous turnout and the event was both poignant and powerful.

United Way of Bartholomew County:

Director Ramirez was recently approved as a new member of the Board of Directors for United Way. Director Ramirez's new membership will begin in January 2015 and will last for 3 years. Director Ramirez expressed her appreciation to Chris Price and Mark Stewart for their mentorship and welcoming perspective.

UPCOMING:

- December 24th — 26th: Christmas holiday, City Hall closed.
- January 1st — 2nd: New Year's holiday, City Hall closed.
- January 5th: MACDA meeting beginning at 2:00 p.m.
- January 13th: Sustained Dialogue at First Presbyterian Church beginning at 5:00 p.m.
- January 14th: CAMEO meeting at the Chamber of Commerce at 6:00 p.m.
- January 15th: Audit and Review Committee meeting in Conference Room 3 at 6:00 p.m.
- January 19th: MLK Day, City Hall closed.
- **January 28th: Next monthly Commission meeting.**

ACTION ITEMS

No Action Items for the month of December.

DISCUSSION

Liaison Opportunities:

Chairperson Kohen stated that he would like for all of the Commissioners to be involved as liaisons to other organizations. The following Commissioners are liaisons to organizations: Commissioner Lewis, CAMEO; Commissioner Stroh, Inclusive Community Liaison; Commissioner Barnes, Pride Alliance; Commissioner Palmer, IUPUC Diversity Cabinet, BCSC Diversity Council, and Audit & Review Committee; Commissioner McClendon, African American Ministry; and Commissioner Benjamin, Lincoln Neighborhood Center. Chairperson Kohen stated that there are other organizations that are important to the Human Rights Commission. There is an open liaison position with Interfaith Forum. Other possible liaison opportunities include the Hispanic/Latino community, the Indian community, and the Chinese community. Discussion ensued.

History Committee:

This discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

2015 Annual Dinner update:

Commissioner Barnes was selected as the Chair of the Annual Dinner subcommittee. Commissioner Gold suggested a dialogue discussion the day after the Annual Dinner. Commissioners Palmer and Barnes recommended that everyone watch Mellody Hobson's TED Talk titled "Color Blind or Color Brave" as an example of a possible keynote speaker topic. Discussion ensued.

Laws Award Subcommittee:

Commissioner Lewis was selected as the Chair of the Laws Award Selection subcommittee.

Art & Essay update:

Deputy Director Connor informed the Commissioners about the topic of the Art & Essay Contests. Commissioners were given a draft of the entry form that had been redesigned from previous years. Discussion ensued.

LIAISON REPORTS

- Commissioner Lewis — Commissioner Lewis reported that there was no December CAMEO meeting but he did attend the November CAMEO meeting. Commissioner Lewis reported that the Chinese Association was the host organization and they presented on Taiwan. Commissioner Lewis reported that the Columbus Parks Foundation provided the community presentation. April Williams, Project and Resource Development Director, gave a general overview of the Parks Foundation. Also, Betsy Warble spoke about and asked for CAMEO member associations to partner with Color Flow: Yoga in the Park event in 2015.
- Commissioner Stroh — no report.

- Commissioner Barnes — Commissioner Barnes invited Commissioners to attend a post-holiday party hosted by the Pride Alliance on January 3rd at 6:00 p.m. at 2715 Franklin Street.

ADJOURNMENT:

**Commissioner Carter moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Gold. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned.**